CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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OPERATION MOUFLON: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE'S (SANDF) REDUNDANT STOCKPILE OF SMALL ARMS AND SPARE PARTS

INTRODUCTION

1. During a meeting of the Plenary Defence Staff Council on 1 October 1998 it was decided to destroy all redundant small arms and spare parts in possession of the SANDF by means of fragmentation. This project was titled Operation Mouflon.

2. These weapons became redundant and/or obsolete due to the availability of more advanced technology, or were confiscated by the SANDF during military operations. The decision to destroy these weapons is in line with international efforts to address the problem of small arms proliferation, from there the decision to rather destroy such weapons than to sell them.

3. Various national organisations such as Gunfree South Africa also supports the destruction of redundant and obsolete weapons instead of selling them.

4. Sufficient funds for the destruction of these weapons have been one of the main reasons for the delay wrt the physical destruction of the weapons, which according to an estimation would amount to R1 982 665. On 12 February 2000 the Norwegian Government signed an agreement with the Department of Defence whereby they donated an amount of 520 000 Norwegian Krone (approximately R403 100) to the funding of the project.

5. Sufficient funds were allocated by 31 May 2000 and contracts signed with two destruction companies in Benoni and Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

6. The spectrum of weapons and spare parts to be destroyed consists of a total number of 262 667 weapons smaller than 12,7mm. Appended below is a list indicating the kinds and quantities of weapons earmarked for destruction.

EXECUTION

7. Operation Mouflon consisted of three phases, i.e

(a) Preparation Phase

This included the design of accounting and verification procedures, as well as the appointment of personnel to execute the verification and accounting process at the various depots where the weapons were stored.

(b) Execution Phase

This consisted of the verification and accounting of weapons to be destroyed, the transporting thereof to the destruction facilities, as well as the physical destruction of the weapons and spare parts.

(c) Finalisation Phase

This includes the finalisation of outstanding computer accounting transactions, as well as the auditing of the whole process.

8. Strict physical security, verifying and accounting procedures were implemented to ensure the smooth progress of the operation.

9. The verification and accounting for example consisted of the following:

(a) A weapons expert would identify the weapons in a loud voice, while removing the working parts thereof.

(b) The serial number of the weapon was then read out loudly, captured on computer and the weapon marked with spray paint.

(c) Hereafter the serial number of the weapon was again read out by another member captured on a second computer and marked with different colour spray paint. The computers were linked and the program used would immediately indicate if separate weapons with the same serial number were identified. In such cases the weapon was marked clearly, tagged and documented and then packed.

(d) Weapons which had no serial numbers were detected at the first computer, tagged and documented and put back in the production line.

(e) During the process the serial numbers of the weapons earmarked for destruction were never compared with the inventory lists of SANDF weapons. Only after destruction, the lists of destroyed weapons would be compared with the inventory lists and the latter then amended accordingly.

(f) Once the process were completed at a specific depot, the chief verification officer would verify the correctness of the process and only then would the weapons be transported to the destruction facility for physical destruction.

LIST OF WEAPONS TO BE DESTROYED

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
7,62mm R-1 Rifles	198 506
7,62mm R-1 Rifles for paratroopers	1 326
7,62mm R-1 Rifles heavy barrel rifles	2 914
7,62mm M-1 FN rifles	3 708
R-2 rifles	12 237
Bren Light Machine Guns	3 637
Vickers Machine Guns	2 256
12,7mm Browining Machine Guns	412
Uzzi Sub-Machine Guns	1 259
Other small calibre weapons (eg AK-47 rifles)	36 412
TOTAL	262 667

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